



IMPLICIT BIAS

Being a part of a team, you must take steps to overcome implicit and explicit biases and reject social stereotypes. Understanding your own bias, whether conscious or unconscious, is the key. Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.¹

DEFINITIONS

Defining Implicit Bias can be hard because it is something understood but not clearly stated.

A bias is a tendency, inclination, or prejudice toward or against something or someone.² Some biases are positive, and some are negative. But biases are often based on stereotypes, rather than actual knowledge of an individual or circumstance.

Implicit biases involve associations outside conscious awareness that lead to a negative evaluation of a person based on irrelevant characteristics such as race or gender.³

IMPLICIT BIAS AFFECTS HOW WE TREAT EACH OTHER

Race

Language

Age

Ability

Education

IMPLICIT BIAS & IPV

Each of us carries attitudes and stereotypes that affect our perceptions and inform our actions. When working with individuals experiencing violence, we must be conscious of our own perceptions of why or how they got into their situation. It is important to be conscious of your assumptions

- Assuming that women are the only victims of IPV
- Assuming any reasons a person is not ready to leave a bad situation
- Assuming that African Americans do not want help
- Assuming everyone views law enforcement as helpful
- Assuming that the person will always go back to the abusive situation

Everyone is influenced by their own implicit biases and those biases impact our actions and treatments.

EFFECTS

Implicit Bias can have a negative effect in IPV patients. The research confirms what many have known or suspected, that years of exposure to structural and cultural racialization and privilege have embedded stereotypes and biases in our individual psyches and the broader culture.⁴ The link among cultural stereotypes and narratives, and systemic policies, practices and behaviors, implicit bias is one part of the system of inequity that serves to justify inequitable policies, practices and behaviors.⁴ Healthcare professionals exhibit the same levels of implicit bias as the general population. Which indicates that biases are likely to influence diagnosis, treatments, referrals, decisions and other recommendation made around care. In order to provide trauma-informed care, we must use an intersectional lens.⁵ Intersectionality is the concept that we have multiple identities which intersect with each other.⁶



IMPLICIT BIAS

INTERVENTIONS

Examining your own perceptions and the influences that form them is an ongoing challenge. Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence outlines six interventions to tackle unconscious or implicit bias:⁷

1. Acknowledge and accept the existence of implicit bias, its manifestations, and its impact
2. Assume individual responsibility to address implicit bias
3. Engage in self-reflection and self-assessment
4. Make good use of the neuroscience to combat “hard Wiring
5. Collect and use data effectively and perform self-monitoring
6. Incorporate cultural and linguistic competence in your practice

However, once you take the first step in recognizing that bias is an inherent part of human thinking, it gets easier to build patterns of perception and reaction that accurately represent your values and your care for your patients. Please note that having biases doesn't make you a “bad” person. Be open to real relationships, surround your self in diverse groups, and be open to suggestions.

RESOURCES

We will continue to broaden the scope of resources over time to include all communities affected by bias and racism.

- Racial Equity Tools: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/> - for information and a variety of relevant websites
- Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present by Harriet A. Washington
- Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do by Jennifer L. Eberhardt
- Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarin R. Banaji
- Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> - a way to learn about your own biases
- Anti-Racism as Violence Prevention: <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/racism/> - videos and discussion guides for domestic violence & sexual assaults advocates

To learn more, check out our [Professional Guidance](#) on immigrant populations, LGBTQ+ community, survivors with disabilities, elder abuse, and many more. Let's open the dialogue, celebrate diversity, and work to effectively reduce health disparities.

REFERENCES

1. The Ohio State University Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, (2012 May 29). *Understanding Implicit Bias*. <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/article/understanding-implicit-bias>
2. De Houwer, J. (2019 Oct 13). What is Implicit Bias? Psychology Today *Spontaneous Thoughts*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/spontaneous-thoughts/201910/what-is-implicit-bias>
3. FitzGerald, C., Hurst, S. Implicit bias in healthcare professionals: a systematic review. *BMC Med Ethics* **18**, 19 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-017-0179-8>
4. Racial Equity Tools. (2020) *Implicit Bias*. Racial Equity Tools. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/communicating/implicit-bias>
5. Rogers, A., Castree, N., and Kitchin, R. (2013). *Intersectionality*. A Dictionary of Human Geography. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-975>
6. National Conference for Community and Justice. *Intersectionality*. <https://www.nccj.org/intersectionality>
7. National Center for Cultural Competence. *Six Interventions to Tackle Unconscious or Implicit Bias*. Conscious and Unconscious Bias in Healthcare. <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/bias/module-4/2.php>